

# Certification Services

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. What is a certification?

A certification is the process by which Census Bureau officials confirm that a Census Bureau document (i.e., tables, maps, reports, special tabulation, such as the EEO file, etc.) is a true and accurate copy.

### 2. When might I need a certification?

A party in a legal proceeding (for example, a court trial, an administrative hearing, etc.) may wish to obtain a copy of a Census Bureau table, map, etc., that they wish to introduce as evidence. However, there may be other circumstances in which a certified copy is desired.

### 3. My governmental unit boundary recently changed and I need certified updated population and housing counts. Where do I begin?

The Census Bureau is reinstating the process for requesting certification of Census Bureau population and housing unit counts for substate general- or special-purpose governmental units that change legal boundaries or that newly incorporate or organize as counties, boroughs, cities, towns, villages, townships, or other special-purpose governments. Visit the Geographically Updated Population Certification Program (GUPCP) web page for more information – <http://www.census.gov/mso/www/certification/GUPCP.html>

This process differs from the regular certification process. There will be a different form to fill out, different pricing, and a different timetable for delivery of the product.

### 4. Where do I get a certification?

For a certification involving information produced by the Census Bureau, a customer can print off the request form on the certification web page and fax it to the Customer Services Center (301-457-4714). You can also submit the request via e-mail ([MSO.Certify@census.gov](mailto:MSO.Certify@census.gov)) or over the phone (301-763-INFO).

### 5. What information should I provide to obtain a certification from the Census Bureau?

See form BC-1868(EF) (PDF). Please state the date of your request, your name, company (if applicable), address, phone and fax numbers, and your deadline for the receipt of the certification. **We will make every effort to meet your**

**deadline if given enough lead time.** In addition, provide a detailed explanation of the data you would like to have certified, including the table or report title and number, or URL address. This will help us process your certification request more quickly. If you have copies of the Census Bureau document(s) you need to have certified, it would be helpful to submit them as well. (The Census Bureau is constantly updating data on the web, so its important to see the date of the document you would like us to certify.)

## **6. Does a certification cost anything?**

Yes. After a certification request is received by the Customer Services Center and reviewed by a specialist, we will send you a price quote. In general, we charge for the time and resources it takes to provide you with this service and prices range from \$70 to \$240. Should you decide to go forward, we will ask you to deposit the full fee before we begin the work. Payment can be made by credit card, check, money order or census deposit account. Paying by check or money order could add approximately 6 weeks to your request. To expedite paying by check, consider sending your check by courier to our headquarters location:

### **To send via Courier:**

U.S. Census Bureau  
ATTN: Certification Services  
Customer Services Center, Room 1579-3 (MS 0801)  
4700 Silver Hill Road  
Suitland, MD 20746

### **Please make check payable to: Commerce-Census**

If you plan to mail your payment to us, please use this address:

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Bureau of the Census  
Attn: Certifications  
Customer Services Center, Mail Stop 0801  
Washington, DC 20233

## **7. How long will it take to obtain a certification?**

The time it takes for a certification will vary. Requests involving tables or maps already available on the Census Bureau web site or in print should take no longer than 2 weeks. All requests will be discussed with the customer and a time estimate will be provided.

## **8. How will the package be shipped to me?**

All orders will be shipped via Federal Express at no additional charge to you.

## **9. Is there any type of rush service available for my order?**

There is no rush service provided.

## **10. What kind of certification is provided to confirm that this product is a true and accurate copy?**

***Impressed:*** An impressed document is one that is certified by an accompanying signed letter impressed with the Census Bureau seal and bound to the document. The Census Law, Title 13, United States Code, Section 3, provides that the seal shall be affixed to all documents authenticated by the Census Bureau and that judicial notice shall be taken of the seal. This is the quickest and least expensive option. It attests that the document accompanying the letter on which the seal is impressed is a true and accurate copy of a Census Bureau record.

**NOTE:** When circumstances prevent us from binding the impressed and signed letter to the document, the document itself will be impressed with the Census Bureau seal and the letter, impressed and signed, will accompany it.

***Attestation:*** Attestation is a more formal process of certification. It consists of a signed statement by a Census Bureau official that the document is authentic and produced or published by the agency, followed by a signed statement by another Census Bureau official witnessing the authority of the first. Generally, documents authenticated by attestation take longer to process due to the additional preparation and review by the attesting officials; consequently, the fee for attestation is higher than for certification by impressing the seal on the document.

## **11. Which option should I choose?**

It is really a matter for you to decide based upon your needs and the requirements of the legal forum in which the document will be used. If the document will be introduced in a legal proceeding, you should check with your lawyer or the forum which will be reviewing and using the document to determine whether an impressed document will suffice or whether a formal attestation is needed.

## **12. How do you prepare publications that appear in your Internet site for certification?**

The Census Bureau has many PDF files of complete publications on our Internet site. If you need the complete publication, we will print the entire document, including the color cover, and bind the publication using a heated plastic spine binding process. Based upon your needs, we will either include the impressed and signed letter in the binding or certify the document with a formal attestation.

### **13. How do I print out these Frequently Asked Questions?**

We have provided a print option for your convenience since not all Internet browsers print the same. At the beginning and end of this page you will find a link in Portable Document Format (PDF). Open the PDF file, then print it out.

### **14. I have more questions. Where can I call to discuss my request?**

Contact the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636), and a representative will take your request and have one of our specialists contact you.

